

University of Groningen

Aging and work

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Published in:
Innovation in Aging

DOI:
[10.1093/geroni/igy023.1548](https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igy023.1548)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2018

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Scheibe, S., & Carstensen, L. L. (2018). Aging and work: The role of emotional factors and competencies. *Innovation in Aging*, 2(Suppl 1), 414-414. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igy023.1548>

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old age, with living a “tranquil life” in old age being highly prevalent in Eastern cultures.

SUBJECTIVE RESIDUAL LIFE EXPECTANCY AND TIMING OF LATE-LIFE PREPARATION IN THREE CULTURES

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Preparation of late life involves future perceptions and timetables of when to engage in preparation activities. Individuals may perceive to be on-time or off-time with regard to their subjective timetables. We explore in what ways subjective deadlines of late-life preparation are related to subjective residual life expectancy depending on preparatory domains, age and culture. We conducted a longitudinal study with two occasions in three cultures (US, China, Germany) with >1000 participants aged 20 to 90 years. Participants completed a questionnaire on subjective residual life expectancy, and planning of preparatory activities in five domains. Findings point to accommodation processes in response to limited subjective residual life expectancy. While timetables for late-life preparation were stable over time, there were few differences between Eastern and Western cultures. Moreover, individuals, who believed to be subjectively off-time compressed their deadlines when having more time in life. In contrast, when perceiving to be on-time, individuals dilated their subjective timetables.

A NEW ERA OF SOCIOEMOTIONAL AGING

S. Cheng, *The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

Economic changes make it increasingly difficult for young people to live in cities, and more people are taking on ad hoc rather than permanent jobs. Little do people know, however, that financial uncertainty/pressure and new housing structures and living arrangements are making perhaps permanent impacts on interpersonal relationships. In Japan and elsewhere, marriage and birth rates are at a historical low, with many people showing little or no sexual interest, choosing to age without physical intimacy, a lifelong partner, and children. This is also happening in a digital era which gives people a culture free language (emojis) and enables connections over distances, but increasingly people may find it difficult to communicate with each other without a machine between them. Eventually people may find ‘new intimacy’ with dolls (already happening) and machines (i.e., artificial intelligence). This talk will ask provocative questions about what aging means in such an era.

SESSION 1585 (SYMPOSIUM)

AGING AND WORK: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL FACTORS AND COMPETENCIES

Chair: S. Scheibe, *University of Groningen, Groningen, Groningen*

Discussant: L.L. Carstensen, *Stanford University, Stanford, California*

Across the globe, workforces are aging. In organizations, these demographic trends are often perceived as threats to organizational effectiveness. Are such fears justified? Older workers certainly face physical and cognitive challenges, but they also have strengths in emotional functioning; these deserve more research attention. This symposium examines age differences in workers’ emotional experiences and competencies and links these with indicators of well-being and performance. Going beyond average age affects, the five papers draw attention to contextual and individual difference factors that modulate age differences. Scheibe and Moghimi report on a diary study suggesting adaptive shifts in emotion regulation strategies with age as a function of contextual factors such as emotional intensity. Yeung and colleagues report an experimental study on age differences in emotional and behavioral reactions to workplace conflicts, also exploring the role of context. Peng and colleagues collected cross-sectional field data from a large sample of employees and found that older workers appear to be more resilient towards abusive supervision than young workers through higher levels of reappraisal. Toomey and Rudolph focus on daily expressions of empathy in an experience-sampling study; they found older workers to show more stable and increasing empathy across the week through political skills (a personal resource). Finally, Reh and colleagues examine the long-term development of emotional functioning of workers, posing the question how occupational role demands shape trajectories of emotional aging. Overall, the studies provide support for the emotional strengths of an aging workforce and identify their mechanisms and facilitating factors.

AGE-RELATED DIFFERENCES IN EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES AT WORK: DIFFERENTIAL TRIGGERS, DIFFERENTIAL CONSEQUENCES?

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D. Moghimi, M.A.², 2. *University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands*

Emerging evidence suggests that older workers, on average, enjoy higher affective well-being than young workers, which has been attributed to higher emotion-regulation competence. Models of emotion regulation emphasize that contextual factors (e.g. emotion intensity) modulate the implementation and adaptiveness of emotion-regulation strategies. We examined age differences in contextual triggers and affective consequences of four common emotion-regulation strategies at work (reappraisal, distraction, suppression, emotion acceptance). In a diary study across 3 weeks, 192 employees reported daily negative work events and their regulatory responses. Per event, we assessed interpersonal nature, intensity, and controllability. Results suggest that older workers respond differently to highly intense events, using less suppression and more acceptance than young workers. Older workers also reported using distraction less often than young workers, irrespective of context. Relationships with affect point at the adaptive nature of such shifts in strategy use. Through better emotional functioning, older workers likely contribute to organizational effectiveness.